

# Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

## News and Notes on Newfoundland and Labrador's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program

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[ich@heritagefoundation.ca](mailto:ich@heritagefoundation.ca)  
Heritage Foundation of NL



### Introducing the Living Heritage Podcast

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We have a new project underway with the ICH office that we are pretty excited about: the Living Heritage Podcast. Living Heritage is about people who are engaged in the heritage and culture sector, from museum professionals and archivists, to tradition bearers and craftspeople - all those who keep heritage alive at the community level.

We talk about their work, their passions, and the day-to-day safeguarding of culture and tradition.

Living Heritage is a special production of CHMR Radio 93.5 FM at Memorial University, in collaboration with the Intangible Cultural Heritage Office of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The show features people engaged in the heritage sector. To date, we have interviewed knitters, archivists, folklorists, and museum workers, and we have talked about everything from agricultural history, to traditional food knowledge, to the traditional cultures of Philippines and Iran.

Dance, food, cod liver oil, ghost stories, historical theatre: it is all grist for the Living Heritage radio mill!

We have recorded over 30 half-hour-long episodes to date, and you have a couple ways you can listen in. If you are in the St. John's area, episodes will air on CHMR 93.5FM every Thursday at 6pm. Once the episodes have aired on CHMR, we are podcasting them, which means you can download the MP3 of the show you want to hear, or you can listen online at any time.

You can find "Living Heritage Podcast" on iTunes, or you can subscribe directly through the ICH blog at [ichblog.ca](http://ichblog.ca). Look for the Podcast link at the top of the blog page.

If you have an idea for an organization or topic you think would provide an interesting episode, or if there is an individual working in the heritage sector you would love to hear interviewed, you can contact Dale Jarvis at [ich@heritagefoundation.ca](mailto:ich@heritagefoundation.ca) or call toll-free 1-888-739-1892 ext 2.

*Living Heritage Podcast logo by Jessie Meyer.*

## Notes from the Saving Our Stories Corner Brook Workshop

*By Dale Jarvis*

On Wednesday, August 5th, 2015, the ICH Office of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador organized a free “Saving Our Stories” workshop with Qalipu Mi’kmaq First Nation Band at their boardroom in Corner Brook.

The workshop was open to anyone with an interest in local history, culture and folklore, and was attended by representatives of Qalipu, and researchers from other organizations including NunatuKavut from Labrador, and St Anthony Basin Resources Inc (SABRI) from the Northern Peninsula.

All three organizations have been working on or are in the planning stages of their own oral history projects. Qalipu will be embarking on a project to document Mi’kmaq places of significance and their stories; NunatuKavut is working on a project to inventory and collect stories from traditional craftspeople, and SABRI has been working for several years on various oral history projects, including current research on cod trapping and trap berths.

The workshop was intended to give a background on how to conduct research interviews. We talked about how to structure interview questions, how to elicit interesting answers, how to collect stories about spaces and places of meaning, and how to ensure you get the best possible recording in the space where you are recording.

I shared a couple tips and tricks gleaned from my own experience doing folklore interviews. One piece of advice I gave was about not being flustered by periods of silence while you are in the middle of the interview process.

“Just wait and don’t rush the interview,” I told the class. “Sometimes

people need a moment to complete their thoughts. If you are silent, chances are your informant will fill the gap by saying something more about the question you asked last.”

After the workshop, I got an email from one of our participants, Kathleen Tucker with SABRI, who had taken my advice to heart when interviewing a local gentleman, Selby James Tucker. Kathleen wrote,

“Well, we went back to visit Selby and I sat down beside him and just let him talk (not interrupting) and at one point he said, ‘You know, when those 14 sailors were rowing for their lives and the waves were going right over the Onion (a huge promontory), I heard them singing a hymn as they rowed.’

I had never heard that before, in all the times the story was told. It had never been mentioned. I looked over at the Missus and asked, ‘Is that right?’

‘Yes,’ she said. ‘I had forgotten. They were singing Abide with Me.’ So...it pays to just be quiet and let the old folks think.”

Thanks, Kathleen, and thanks to Qalipu for acting as host!

You can download a list of my tips for folklore and oral history interviews at <http://tinyurl.com/oralhistorytips>.

*Workshop photos courtesy Mitch Blanchard, Qalipu.*



## Creating a Community Folklore or Oral History Booklet

*By Dale Jarvis*

In the last issue of the ICH Update, Terra Barrett wrote about the community heritage booklet she had edited, based on her 2014 oral history research in Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove. It is the second booklet the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador has worked on this year, with our “Looking Back: Games We Played” booklet being the first.

These two booklets bring us to total of six booklets in our Community Living Heritage Series, which also includes work with the Memorial University Department of Folklore field school projects in Quidi Vidi and Keels, a booklet from our work with the Heart’s Content Heritage District, and one based on the folk beliefs and legends of Bay Roberts. Copies of all six of these booklets can be downloaded from the ICH website at [www.mun.ca/ich/resources](http://www.mun.ca/ich/resources).

Many of these booklets came out of projects we worked on with student researchers, though some, like the Bay Roberts and Heart’s Content booklets, were completed by HFNL staff.

I recently had a question from a community group wishing to create a booklet based on interviews with seniors. I emailed off some notes to them, and in doing so, though it might be useful information to other people attempting similar projects.

Creating a community oral history booklet is quite simple in a way:

- A researcher conducts a series of recorded interviews on a topic or theme;
- Photos are taken of the interviewees, and/or historic photographs are scanned at high resolution suitable for printing;
- The researcher goes through the interviews, and selects what they think are the most appropriate sections or stories;
- Those stories are transcribed, and a word document is created;
- We send that document, with the photos, to a graphic designer, who in turn creates the finished booklet;
- We print the booklet and distribute it to the community; and,
- Where possible we put the audio of the interviews online, as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage inventory, on Memorial University's Digital Archive Initiative.

Creating a community folklore or oral history booklet is a good way to present collected information back to the people in your community. It can be taken on as a short-term project, easily finished within a summer or short contract.

To create a booklet, I would recommend keeping the interviews pretty simple. For the “Looking Back” booklet, we worked with eight seniors. Each entry has a short little bio of the person, a photo of them now, a historic photo where possible, and then quotes from their interview. We organized a small book launch party at the senior's club after, and everyone seemed delighted to see their words in print. Starting small also means that you could create a second (or third) booklet another year, either with different seniors in the community, or on different topics. That approach is much easier than trying to record everyone or everything at once. A free, downloadable pdf of the finished booklet could be put on your town or organization website. Another option would be to print additional copies, and sell them for a small fee in your local museum, visitor centre, or craft shop.

If you are interested in creating a similar booklet for your community, and want some help getting started, email me at [ich@heritagefoundation.ca](mailto:ich@heritagefoundation.ca), or call toll free 1-888-739-1892 ext. 2.

